



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH
*1102 SE Quince Street • PO Box 47990
Olympia, Washington 98504-7990*

March 30, 2004

The Honorable Norm Dicks
House of Representatives
2467 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-4706

Dear Representative Dicks:

I am writing as chair of the Washington State Board of Health in response to your letter of March 24, 2004 concerning revisions to the Board's onsite wastewater rules.

We on the Board appreciate the attention you have given to this rule revision process. We share your interest in providing the highest possible level of protection to the waters of Washington State and we recognize that failing or improperly maintained or operated small on-site septic systems are one of the many contributors to the degradation of marine waters and shellfish beds.

Your letter requests that the Board and the Department of Health work together and with the community to determine how the draft rules can be strengthened to give greater protection to marine waters. This work has already begun through the work of the Department. The Board supports this effort and looks forward to contributing. Also, Ron Shultz in the Office of the Governor will convene an interagency work group to develop a strategy to address marine pollution and that group will consider policy changes that are outside the scope of the Board's current rule making. Board staff will be active participants in this process.

As you know, on-site operation and maintenance is a complicated policy issue that has been extensively debated. Many regulatory approaches that look promising on paper have turned out to be ineffective given current fiscal, political, legal, and technological constraints. Nevertheless, the Board believes that additional collaborative and creative discussions are likely to result in credible, workable ideas about ways to strengthen the proposed rule. The Board is therefore very supportive of continued work and will give serious consideration to suggestions that arise from it.

Thank you again for your interest in the Board's work and for the concern you continue to show for the health of Washington State—its people and its natural resources.

Sincerely,

Linda Lake, Chair
Washington State Board of Health

cc: Mary Selecky, Department of Health
Steve Meyer, Department of Health
Ron Shultz, Office of the Governor
Washington State Board of Health Members